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Saigon 3324

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 3324

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. LY QUY CHUNG, FLOOR LEADER OF PRO-HUONG SOUTHERN RENAISSANCE BLOC IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT HE WHOLE-HEARTEDLY AGREED WITH PLEA REPORTEDLY MADE TO PRESS BY HA THUC KY AUGUST 14 FOR OUTRIGHT U.S. INTERVENTION TO ASSURE THAT FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS ARE FAIR AND FREE. CHUNG SAID HE DID NOT FORESEE

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EFFORT BY GVN TO TAMPER WITH BALLOT BOXES ON ELECTION DAY OR RIG FINAL ELECTION RESULTS. PROBLEM RATHER ONE OF UNFAIR ADVANTAGE WHICH CHUNG BELIEVES GVN CANDIDATES ENJOY DURING CAMPAIGN AND LOW LEVEL OF CIVIC EDUCATION ON PART OF AVERAGE VIETNAMESE. MANY, CHUNG MAINTAINED, WILL VOTE FOR THIEU/KY BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID TO DO OTHERWISE EVEN THOUGH PRESSURE NOT ACTUALLY BEING PUT ON THEM. CHUNG CITED EXAMPLE OF RELATIVELY WELL-EDUCATED FRIEND WHO HAD ASKED HIM IF SHE WOULD GET INTO TROUBLE IF SHE VOTED FOR SENATE LIST OF MRS. TRAN VAN VAN, ONE OF THE OPPOSITION SENATE SLATES SUPPORTING HUONG'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY.

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2. ASKED IF ANY OF CIVILIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HAD CONSIDERED WITHDRAWING FROM RACE AND THROWING SUPPORT BEHING ANOTHER SLATE, CHUNG SAID THIS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BUT INCONCLUSIVELY. HE COMMENTED THAT AS FAR AS TRAN VAN HUONG WAS CONCERNED, HE IS RELUCTANT TO MAKE ANY DEALS WITH MINOR CANDIDATES BECAUSE THEIR CONDITIONS FOR WITHDRAWING IN HIS FAVOR WERE TOO EXHORBITANT CONSIDERING THE NUMBER OF VOTES THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE. CHUNG THEN QUALIFIED THIS JUDGMENT BY ADDING THAT HUONG HAS RESPECT FOR HA THUC KY, CONSIDERS HIM SERIOUS CANDIDATE AND MIGHT BE WILLING TO OFFER HIM POSITION IN HIS GOVERNMENT IN EXCHANGE

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FOR WITHDRAWAL. IMPLICATION SEEMED CLEAR THAT HUONG-HA THUC KY SLATES ARE ACTIVELY NEGOTIATING. CHUNG MADE NO MENTION OF SUU/DAN SLATE AND APPARENTLY DOES NOT THINK THAT SUU INTERESTED IN AGREEMENT BETWEEN CIVILIAN CANDIDATES TO POOL RESOURCES AGAINST THIEU/KY SLATE.

3. COMMENT: (A) CHUNG'S COMMENT TO EFFECT THAT HE FAVORS DIRECT U.S. INTERVENTION IN ELECTIONS REFLECTS FEELING WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE WIDESPREAD AMONGST OPPOSITIONISTS, THAT OUR HANDS-OFF ATTITUDE TOWARDS ELECTION WORKS TO BENEFIT OF MILITARY SLATE AND GIVES MILITARY LATITUDE THEY NEED TO ASSURE ELECTION OF THIEU/KY SLATE. SOME OF THESE OPPOSITIONISTS FURTHER REASON THAT THIS IS CONSCIOUSLY DESIRED EFFECT ON OUR PART AND THAT WE REALLY SUPPORT THIEU/KY CANDIDACY FOR SAKE OF POLITICAL STABILITY, CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT AND BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THEY ARE BEST ABLE TO PROSECUTE WAR EFFORT EFFECTIVELY. OPPOSITIONIST PLEAS FOR INTERVENTION TO ASSURE FAIR AND FREE ELECTIONS ARE THUS IN OUR JUDGMENT MORE THAN SIMPLE REQUESTS FOR US TO DO WHAT WE REASONABLY AND PROPERLY CAN TO ASSIST VIET NAM IN ITS CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT BUT ALSO APPEALS FOR THE U.S. TO PRESSURE THE GVN IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INHIBIT THEM FROM FULLY EMPLOYING THEIR ADVANTAGES AS INCUMBENTS.

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(B) SOME SUPPORTERS OF THE THIEU/KY SLATE, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE MILITARY, CONVERSELY INTERPRET WHAT THEY SOMETIMES CONSIDER TO

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BE U.S. PRESSURE ON THEM AS EVIDENCE OF OUR DESIRE FOR ELECTION OF A CIVILIAN SLATE. THE TEMPERATURES RISE AND FALL ON THESE FEELINGS BUT WE BELIEVE THAT NEITHER SIDE CONSIDERS THAT WE HAVE EXHIBITED IMPROPER FAVORITISM.

BUNKER

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